PROGRAM POLICY COORDINATION WORKGROUP
MINUTES
May 13, 2004
GEF III, Room 041

Attendees:

Carol Amelong, DHSF/BIMA	Carol Medaris, WCCF
Autumn Arnold, DHFS/PPG	Tadesse Mengesha, DWD/DWS/EPS
Jonathan Bader, WISCAP	Wendy Metcalf, Marquette County DHS
Shirin Cabraal, LAW	Michelle Pauser, DHFS/Call Center
James Hennen, DHFS/SE Region	Linda Preyz, DWD
Michael Jacob, Covering Kids & Families-WI	Scott Riedasch, BHCE/DHCF
Jon Janowski, MHTF	Sheryl Siegl, Winnebago County DHS
Mal Jones, DHFS/BHCE	Jayne Wanless, DHFS/BHCE
John LaPhilliph, BHCE/DHCF	Mike Wineke, Dane County DHS
Mike McKenzie, DHFS/BHCE	

Please note change of location for next meeting at the end of these minutes!!

Food Stamp Program Participation Grant Update   **Autumn Arnold**

Autumn provided handouts showing progress so far. She also provided paper copies of the screens an applicant will use. She will do a demo with the laptop at the July meeting. This group engaged in a lot of discussion about the screens and provided a great deal of feedback for Autumn to take back to her team.

Medical Assistance for Released Inmates   **John LaPhilliph**

John reported that decision have been made to move up the implementation date for counties to June or July. DOC still needs time to train staff. MA applications will be sent to the counties only if there is insufficient time for DOC to gather supporting documentation and submit to SSA 90 or more days prior to the release date. They still don't know how many cases there could be. A new wrinkle is that they may want to apply for food stamps at the same time. According to FS regulations, FS and SSI applications can be sent to SSA together. SSA can send the FS application to the county to be kept until the release date. The release date then becomes the filing date. The SSA face-to-face interview counts toward both SSI and FS, so the counties would not have to call the individual in for a second face-to-face interview. In situations where the MA application would be sent to the county, DOC would fax in the one-page application to the county on the release date and direct the inmate to contact the county for an interview. Since most of these cases would qualify for priority service, DOC should be sure to include addresses and phone number for the inmate, so that counties can contact the person for an appointment if the person does not contact the county. If the person is a drug felon, will probation and parole be performing urinalysis and will the results be shared with counties? This would save counties' time and money. (As an aide, Mike McKenzie indicated that a budget paper has been submitted to the legislature asking that the drug felon be excluded from FS requirements.) Sheryl asked John if DOC or DHFS would be doing any kind of monitoring of the process to see how successful it is, how many approvals/denials there might be, what kind of impact it has. John said he thought DOC would be doing some kind of tracking through their database. Sheryl thought that these inmates would be mandatory for FSET until their disability determination was made. Mike W. indicated that Dane County accepts self-declaration of incapacity if and SSI application has been filed, which exempts the person from FSET participation. Mike McKenzie agreed that this is acceptable, but it is contrary to information Sheryl has received in the past.

Funeral & Cemetery Aids Program   **Scott Riedasch**
Scott reported that some decisions are still pending, and he will report on this at the July meeting.

Broad-based Categorical Eligibility   **Jayne Wanless**
Jayne explained that according to federal regulations, anyone could be authorized to receive TANF services if they have been informed about TANF. This means that if we provided a brochure about TANF, the case can be considered categorically eligible for food stamps. This will make all food stamp cases "categorical." DHFS is making up a brochure in conjunction with DWD. For now, a one-page sheet has been developed to hand out. We will do this at application and recertification. This initiative starts July 1. It is easy to automate in CARES. The advantages included ignoring assets and the gross income test. There are also several advantages to zero-benefit cases. By making all FS cases categorically eligible, errors will be reduced. Language will be added to the addendum and signature page so that by signing, the applicant acknowledges that s/he received information about TANF services. It was suggested that that language be expanded to include items, which are now to be acknowledged by checking and/or initialing a box. A mass mailing will be done to inform all current FS recipients of TANF services, so that they can be converted to categorical eligibility. A draft Operations Memo will be sent to members of this committee for their review.

Interim Reporting Phase IIB   **Mike McKenzie**
Mike McKenzie said that user-acceptance testing has begun. An Operations Memo is going through the approval process. It should be out in 7-10 days. They have received good feedback from advocacy groups in Milwaukee County, where 50% of the State's FS cases reside. Final decisions are being made on what to put on the forms. System changes will occur on June 26th with an implementation date of July 1st. Mike added that other areas they will be looking at, when Phase IIB is started, include migrant use of EBT cards in cafeterias and a 24-month certification period for EBD cases. There is still no response from FNS on the SSI/FS outreach effort that DHFS wanted to initiate.

Other Discussions
Jonathan asked what Wisconsin's FS participation rate is. National statistics indicated that Wisconsin had the fifth-highest increase in FS participation last year. Mike responded that is still about 64%.

There was some discussion about Family Care and the troubles in Milwaukee County. Scott said he could add that as a future agenda item. DHFS is randomly spot-checking the 30-day processing time limits and that in the course of these spot-checks, other problems have surfaced.

Next Meeting - Thursday, July 8, 2004 - 12:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m. at 1 West Wilson, Room 751.